

From: Dick Weingart [richard.weingart@snet.net]

Sent: Friday, February 20, 2009 10:38 PM

To: Friis, John

Subject: Public Hearing Testimony - HB 6493 \*\*\* Education Committee - February 23, 2009 \*\*\*

Chairman Fleischmann, Chairman Gaffey, Distinguished Members of the Education Committee,

My name is Richard Weingart, I am a resident of Chaplin, CT, and I would like to thank you for the opportunity to submit this testimony to the Committee. I first want to make it clear that my testimony represents my own personal views and experience as a citizen of Chaplin, and should not be taken to represent in any way the views of the boards or committees on which I currently serve. These positions are: Chair of the Chaplin Board of Finance, and member of the current Regional District 11 Dissolution Study Committee.

I write to you in full support of HB 6493, and I hereby request a favorable referral of this bill by the Committee to the full Legislature for action. My support for this bill is based on a simple principle. I strongly believe that in any small district such as Regional District 11, the most fair, equitable, and democratic method of determining the outcome of a vote on either withdrawal of towns, or dissolution of the District, is by a majority of the votes cast in the regional district, as this bill would permit. The onerous outcome of rejecting this bill, thereby perpetuating the status quo which requires a majority vote in each town, is to effectively deprive our member towns of the option to dissolve an agreement, entered into decades ago, that may no longer meet the educational needs of students in the 21st century, and may have become too costly for the member towns to sustain.

I offer the following additional comments in support of HB 6493.

1) Disagreement and discord among member towns within Region 11 has reached a point that demands a decisive resolution.

As mentioned above, I am currently serving on the Regional District 11 Dissolution Study Committee, which was impaneled in accordance with C.G.S. Section 10-63a following affirmative votes by the towns of Chaplin and Scotland to institute the procedure for dissolution. This is the second such committee convened in the district in the past five years, the first being a Withdrawal Study Committee initiated by the town of Scotland. The fact that Scotland has twice initiated such action, the second time joined by Chaplin, shows that citizens of these towns have sincere and serious questions about

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express their preferences on an equal voting basis with all other parents and voters within the district.

In summary, I am certain that the committee will hear considerable testimony on the issue of whether Regional District 11 should be preserved or dissolved. In fact, I believe that a thorough and healthy debate on the issues is an excellent way of educating all our citizens as our towns prepare for the upcoming referenda on dissolution.

But in the end, to dissolve or not to dissolve RD11, is not the most important issue here. In the end, the most important issue harkens back to one of the fundamental founding principles of our great democracy. In the end, the most important issue before you is that every citizen in our three towns must have the right to have her or his vote counted equally among all other votes cast within the regional district in deciding the most important question that our three towns have faced in decades.

Members of the Education Committee, I submit that you have both the power and the responsibility to help our three towns move one step closer to realizing this fundamental right; i.e. one person, one vote, counted equally among the total of votes cast. Again, I urge you to help us take this one step forward by issuing a favorable referral on HB 6493 to the full Legislature.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely yours,

Richard G. Weingart

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